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SKETCHES,

Historical and Pictorial,

OF PAINTING IN ITALY, FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD OF ITS RESTORATION.

ANDREA TAFI is mentioned by Vasari and Baldinucci, as having excelled in the execution of Mosaic. They scarcely notice his having painted, except for the sake of stating that his ill success with the pencil induced him to turn his attention to Mosaic-work, which was at that period held in high estimation, on account of its durability. Yet they both agree that he had pupils, who afterwards distinguished themselves as painters, a circumstance which is of itself sufficient to prove that Tafi not only professed painting, but that he must have distinguished himself in that art. He was born in 1213; yet Baldinucci pretends that he was a pupil of Cimabue, who was not born till twenty-seven years after him, and who could hardly have given lessons before his thirtieth year, at which time his pupil must have been fifty-seven—a very promising age to commence the study of painting! While we are

upon the subject of Baldinucci's mistatements, it may be as well to mention another very glaring one. He mentions Frà Mino da Turrita, a Mosaic painter, as the pupil of Tafi, and states that he died about the year 1300. But he takes care not to inform his readers that Mino flourished in 1225, when Tafi was but twelve years old, as is evident from the following inscription, placed in large letters on his Mosaic of St. John, at Florence:

"Vigiuti quinque Christi cum mille ducentis."

But Tafi worked in distemper as well as Mosaic. One of his pictures is given in the "Etruria Pittrice;" and the author of "Considérations sur l'état de la Peinture," &c. mentions three which were in his own possession. Among these was a representation of the Virgin and Child, with a St. John, a St. Peter, and two Angels, one playing on the violin, and the other on the mandoline. It was usual at this period, for individual artists to combine the practice of all the three branches of the Fine Arts—Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture; and many of them worked in Mosaic, as well as in Fresco and Distemper.

A whimsical story is related of Tafi, in one of Sacchetti's tales. It was customary with that painter, and indeed with most of the artists of that period, when the nights were long, to rise early in the morning, before sun-rise, and proceed with their work, after having roused their *garzoni*, or pupils. Buonamico Buffalmaco, the humorous friend of Bruno and Calandrino, so celebrated in Boccacio, happened to be one of those; and, as he was by no means fond of being called out of bed in the middle of his night's rest, he set his wits to work, to discover some expedient for putting a stop to this practice. Tafi's character possessed a tolerable portion of the weakness and superstition of the age. Buonamico knew this, and he soon hit upon a stratagem to avail himself of it. He went to the cellar, and raked together thirty enormous black beetles, and, by means of small pins, attached to the back of each a little taper. Just as Tafi's usual hour for rising had arrived, he lighted the tapers, and put the insects, one by one, through a chink of the door of his master's bed-room. Poor Tafi, wakening at the moment, and terrified to death at the sight of these crawling lights, began to recommend himself to the Virgin, and saying his prayers as softly as he could, hid his head under the bed-clothes. In this situation he remained till day-light, never once thinking of troubling his pupils. At length, however, he ventured to rise, and going to Buffalmaco's bed-side, asked him whether he had seen any thing of the thousand devils who had paid him a visit during the night. Buffalmaco replied that he had not, but that he was surprised he had not been called up as usual. "Ah!" said Tafi, "I had something else to think of besides painting, and I am determined not to remain in this house much longer." The following night Buonamico repeated his experiment, though on a smaller scale, putting only three beetles into his master's room. This was quite enough, however, added to the fright he had already had, to prevent Tafi from enjoying a wink of sleep; and as soon as it was day, he rose and left the house, with a determination never to enter it again. After some difficulty, however, Buffalmaco prevailed on him to return, and, in concert with the parish-priest, exerted himself to console the afflicted artist. Aided by his spiritual auxiliary, Messer Buffalmaco succeeded in persuading his master that demons must necessarily feel a very great antipathy to painters, not only because these evil spirits were always represented by artists in hideous and deformed shapes, but because they must be continually offended by the innumerable pictures of Saints and Angels which were painted. "So," continued he, "it is very natural they should feel a spite against us; and as they are more powerful in the night than in the day, they will go on playing these pranks; aye, and even worse, if this practice of getting up in the night-time is not done away with." Tafi was

by no means inclined to dispute this point; he lay quietly in his bed for the future, and was never more disturbed by the demons.

The following outline of one of Taft's paintings, furnishes an example of the admission of figures of different proportions into the same composition; a practice which was not unusual among the early painters. It represents the Virgin and Child, with some Saints and Angels.

The above design is stiff and dry, and altogether inferior to that of the Guido da Sienna, inserted in our first article. There is something rather graceful in the turn of the Virgin's head, but her attitude is awkward, and that of the Child is extremely cramped. The feet of the Virgin seem here to be studiously concealed; while in the picture we have just alluded to, they are boldly and successfully shewn.

ITALY DESCRIBED BY GOETHE.

From the Brenner, Sept. 8, Evening.

Near Zirl, the road descends into the valley of the Inn. It would be difficult to describe the extreme beauty of this spot, which was greatly increased by the magnificence and varied hues of the sunny clouds. The postilion drove much faster than I could have wished. As he had not yet heard mass, he was eager to reach Inspruck, and the feast of the Virgin served as a stimulus to his devotion. The carriage therefore went at full speed, and the slope of the roads between the Inn and the hill of Saint-Martin, served only to increase its velocity. This hill is an enormous mass of calcareous stones. The rock is steep, and of prodigious height.

The situation of Inspruck, in a fine and broad valley, enclosed with high rocks and mountains, is very picturesque. At first I felt inclined to stay here; but I soon determined to proceed. Every body had dressed themselves in their best for the festival. The people, who are as pious as they are gay, go in pilgrimage to Wilden, a place of devotion half a league from the town, towards the mountains. At two o'clock we passed through the midst of this multitude. The pilgrims were pouring in from all quarters.

After leaving Inspruck, the country becomes mountainous, and improves in beauty at every step. No description could give an adequate idea of it. I proceeded to a considerable height, along a perfectly smooth road, by the side of cascades, the waters of which, directing their course towards the Inn, present the most varied aspects in their fall. The road is in some places cut into the rock itself, and is bordered on one side by steep declivities, and on the other by an open country in fine cultivation. The distant villages, straggling houses, and cottages with carefully whitened walls, appearing here and there among the fields and the woods, vary and enliven the prospect. The scene soon changes, however; the land is every where converted into meadows, and the road proceeds by an almost insensible descent.

The sun had just set; his last rays had tinged the horizon with red, and the usual signs announced the gradual approach of darkness. The eye ceased to distinguish individual objects, and the masses, which had before been defined with such grandeur and magnificence, now produced only confused impressions on my mind. But the moon suddenly appeared, and lighted up with new splendour the snow-clad summits of the mountains. I must now wait until the beams of the rising sun penetrate into the narrow passes, among which I am, as it were, enclosed within the limits which separate the south from the north.

The inhabitants of this country are active and frank in their manners. The countenances of the natives have nearly a uniform character. The women are distinguished by large eyes, surmounted by beautifully arched eye-brows. The men, on their part, have fair and bushy eye-brows. They wear green hats, which harmonize well with the grey colour of the mountains, and give a certain air of smartness to their costume. Their hats are decorated with ribands, or with broad pieces of fringed taffety, tied in an elegant bow, which serves to fasten in a flower or feather. The women, on the contrary, disfigure themselves by wearing large caps of white cotton, trimmed with fringe, which in form resemble men's night-caps. This singular head-dress has a most unbecoming effect. However, when they travel, the women wear green hats like those of the men, in which they look uncommonly well.

I remarked that the people here are very fond of peacock's feathers, and indeed of all kinds of variegated feathers. Travellers who visit this country, would do well to provide

themselves with a stock of feathers; for one given at the right moment, is often a more acceptable present than money.

While I collect these sheets together for the sake of communicating to my friends the sentiments and ideas that occupy me, and acquainting them with all that occurs to me on my journey, I now and then cast an anxious glance on the manuscripts which I have brought with me, for the purpose of finishing and arranging them for the edition of my works which Goeschen is about to publish. Among the number is *Iphigenia*, which Herder has so warmly recommended to me. It is as yet merely a sort of sketch in poetic prose; but the praise which Herder has bestowed on the work, has inspired me with a regard for it. I have not hinted to him, or to my other friends, the plan of my journey. He supposes that my intention is merely to make an excursion among the Alps. He attaches no importance to mineralogy and geology, of which he always speaks with derision. He tells me I should do better to devote attention to my tragedy, than to amuse myself in collecting stones. These exhortations turn my thoughts to literary occupations; to which, however, I have not had an opportunity of applying myself since my departure. To-day I looked out *Iphigenia*, and I intend to make it my travelling companion in the fine countries which I am about to visit. The days are long: I run no risk of having my attention diverted from the object I have in view. The magnificent scenery of Nature will excite my imagination, while the fresh air and fine climate will inspire me with activity.

Trent, September 11.

I arrived here about eight o'clock yesterday evening, after a journey of fifty hours. I immediately retired to rest, and I arose this morning just in the right mind for continuing my narrative. The evening before last, I closed my journal, and went out to sketch the post inn on the Brenner; but I could not succeed, and I returned out of humour to my lodgings. My landlord advised me to continue my journey, assuring me that I should have a fine moonlight night, and an excellent road. I knew that he wanted the use of his horses on the following morning to get in his hay, and therefore the proposition was made from interested motives; however, as it happened to accord with my own intentions, I readily acceded to it. I packed up my luggage, and set out. The wind had dispersed the clouds, and the evening was delightful.

The postilion fell asleep, and the horses descended the hill rapidly, for they were well acquainted with the road. They slackened their pace when they came to the plain; but the whip of the postilion, who was by this time awake, drove them on speedily, and, after crossing several high hills, we arrived near the Adige. The moon shone brightly on every surrounding object. Through clusters of old pines I occasionally observed some water-mills, which had a very beautiful effect.

At nine o'clock I reached Sterzingen, whence, however, I departed immediately. It was midnight when we entered Mittelwald; every body was asleep except the postilion. We proceeded onwards to Brixen, where we did not stop; and by daylight we reached Colman. I was vexed at having passed through this magnificent country during the night, and at a pace which resembled a forced flight, rather than a journey of pleasure. I however found consolation in comparing my situation with that of the sailor who is wafted by a favourable breeze to the destined port. At daybreak I perceived the first hill planted with vines; and pursuing my course further to the north, I distinguished the valley of Botzen. The town is nearly surrounded with steep hills, which are cultivated to a certain height. It is open only on the south side. The Tyrolean mountains shelter it on the north. I was immediately sensible of the mild temperature of this country. Here the Adige takes its direction towards

the south. The vine decorates the little hills at the foot of the mountains; the stocks rise above the tufted foliage, and the purple grapes droop in elegant clusters to the ground, the heat of which promotes their maturity. In the valleys, which are generally covered with meadows, the vine is occasionally planted in lines, interspersed with stalks of maize, which rival it in height. I have seen some ten feet high. The vines are not yet divested of their male flowers, which are usually removed shortly after the fecundation.

I reached Botzen, still favoured by fair weather. Here I found assembled dealers in all sorts of merchandize. They had come to attend the fair, and their animated countenances indicated the enjoyment of an active and contented life. In the market-place, quantities of pears and peaches were elegantly ranged in round flat baskets, so that they might not be injured by pressing against each other. Here I was reminded of some lines which I saw written on the window of an inn in Ratisbon.

Comme les pèches et les mélons
Sont pour la bouche d'un bâron
Ainsi les verges et les bâtons,
Sont pour les fous, dit Salomon.

This had certainly been written by some northern baron; and it is no less certain that he would have changed his opinion, had he travelled to these southern regions.

A great trade in silks is carried on at the fair of Botzen. Here is also a considerable traffic in cloths and skins, which are brought from the mountain. The dealers were all busily engaged in collecting their money, booking orders, and opening credits. I should have felt great interest in inspecting the various articles of merchandize that were collected here, but my anxiety to see Italy impelled me onward; and besides, in this statistical age, one can always derive sufficient information on these subjects from books. My object now is to awaken in my mind all the sentiments that interest me, to exercise my observing faculties, to calculate the extent of my knowledge, the correctness of my ideas, and the rapidity of my conceptions; and finally, to banish all the erroneous impressions I have imbibed. The necessity of acting for myself, and maintaining continual presence of mind, has within these few days imparted fresh vigour to my intellectual faculties. Formerly I had only to reflect, to dictate, and to give orders; but now, I am obliged to make myself acquainted with the value of the current money, to make payments, to keep notes, and to write for myself: in short, I feel myself quite another being.

From Botzen to Trent the road runs for the space of eight leagues through a valley, the fertility of which seems to increase at every step. All kinds of vegetation are most vigorous and flourishing on the heights. The influence of the sun is exceedingly powerful, and every thing tends to impress the mind with a sublime idea of the bounty of Heaven.

On the road a poor woman begged that I would take into the carriage with me her child, who was disabled from walking by the scorching heat of the ground. I performed this act of charity in homage to the power of the climate. The child was very well dressed, but I could not get him to speak a word.

The current of the Adige is less rapid here than in other parts. Along the banks of the river, in the valley and on the hills, the plantations are so thickly crowded together, that they seem to have scarcely sufficient room for fair growth. Vines and maize, mulberry, apple, pear, quince, and nut-trees, seem to dispute for the possession of the soil. The elder overtops the walls, the green ivy spreads its branches over the rocks, in the clefs of which the lizard is seen gliding. In short, every object in these delightful regions calls to mind some of the finest productions of art. The braided hair of the village girls, the light dresses of the

peasants, the vigorous oxen returning from their labours, the ass bearing his burden—all revive the recollection of those rural scenes which have been so vividly portrayed by the pencils of Claude Lorraine or Salvator Rosa. During the mild temperature of the evening, only a few clouds overhang the mountains, and these seem to be almost immoveable in the air. Immediately after sun-set, the buzzing and chirping of the insects begin to be heard; and then the traveller feels himself quite at home. As for myself, a pleasing illusion almost persuades me that I was born and have lived here, and that I have just returned from a whale-fishing excursion in Greenland.

An inhabitant of the south would, doubtless, regard my enthusiasm as childish. But I have long anticipated all that I now feel and express: I had a presentiment of all this while I was dragging out my existence in a rigorous climate.

EXHIBITIONS OF PAINTING, &c.

We have already mentioned, that portraits form a very distinguishing feature of the Exhibition at Somerset-house. The vast annual production of works of this class is really astonishing, and to many affords matter of deep regret. Year after year a fresh outcry has been raised against the prevailing rage for portrait-painting, yet the disorder seems rather to have extended than diminished. So truly epidemic indeed does it appear to be, that if its effects be in reality as baneful as it is pretended they are to the vital energy of art, foreign academies would do well to close their gates upon our artists, and make them perform quarantine before they enter.—We are among the number of those, however, who think by no means so meanly of portraiture as it has become the fashion among critics to do. Not but that we deplore as much as any of them, the excess to which the system is at present carried, and the indiscriminating spirit with which it seems to be pursued; but we are of opinion that, with all its disadvantages (and we feel that they are many), portrait-painting is, on the whole, one of the most interesting branches of art, and one too with which we would the least willingly part. Were we to speak as painters, indeed, we should say that the comparative merits of historical painting are infinitely beyond those of portraiture; that the laborious course of studies and intense application required to form an historical painter, bear no proportion whatever with the preparative labours of a mere portrait painter. But, speaking more impartially, with the feelings of men accustomed to estimate the value of things by their good effects, we should be inclined to draw a very different conclusion. We will readily admit that the great mass of portraits, those which are mere transcripts of individual features, mere *maps* of the countenance, destitute of character and unanimated by expression, are a real degradation to the art, and fit only to gratify the tasteless ignorance of those who are unaccustomed to examine seriously even the surface of things, much less to go beyond it, and whose eyes are easily satisfied by the most partial resemblance. But the genuine style of portraiture—that which makes us acquainted with the mind as well as the countenance of the individual—which brings us in contact with his thoughts, his feelings, his manners, his habits—the portraiture of Titian, of Vandyke, of Reynolds, of Lawrence—what can be more interesting, what more instructive than this? Events may be recorded in the page of history—the imaged fiction of romance may be sung by the poet—but who is there, like the painter, that can bring at once before us, "in form as palpable" as Nature's own, the object of our esteem, our admiration, or our hatred—that can condense, as it were, into a single focus of

intensity, the philanthropic virtues of a Howard, the mental energies of a Ximenes, or the cold heartlessness and brutal passions of a Borgia?

We have been led into this train of reflections, through a visit which we paid the other day to an exhibition of portraits lately opened to the public in Leicester-square. Here, surrounded by all the beauty, wit, and valour of the three last centuries, the spectator is furnished with a rare intellectual treat. His eye can scarcely stray over the walls, without falling upon some object which recalls an interesting period of history. Here he finds the fierce warrior by the side of his deadly foe—the ambitious monarch in close contact with his powerful rival—eyes which once divided the hearts of princes, still contesting for the prize of beauty; and heads which have made equal schisms among the minds of men, still looking as intense and thoughtful as when engaged in the midst of their learned controversies. Here too he finds, brought as it were into social conference, all whom the page of history has recorded as great, generous, and good; and, to borrow the fine thought of a celebrated author of antiquity, his spirit seems to mingle with those around him, and to commune with the mighty dead.

THE YELLOW DOMINO.

In the latter part of the reign of Louis the 15th of France, masquerades were an entertainment in high estimation, and public ones were often given, at immense cost, on court days, and such occasions of rejoicing. As persons of all ranks might gain admission to these last spectacles, provided they could afford the purchase of the ticket, very strange *rencontres* frequently took place at them, and exhibitions almost as curious, in the way of disguise, or assumption of character.

On one occasion, a niece of the Duke de Nemours, Madame La Vallere, a woman of high rank and fashion, being separated from her company upon a very crowded staircase, was assisted by a stranger of marked activity and address. The gallant was masked, and cloaked to the teeth; but he possessed a handsome figure, and a gentlemanly bearing; and, after extricating Madame La V. by main strength, from a situation of considerable difficulty, he surprized her something by addressing her by name.

"You know me, then?" said Madame La V., starting.

The stranger assented.

"But, perhaps, it is by name only?"

That was not the case; for the respondent, though he persevered in refusing to unmask, led at once to details which could scarcely be within the knowledge even of a common acquaintance.

"This is astonishing!" exclaimed the lady.—"And you will not tell me to whom I am indebted?"

"Instantly, if you command it: but, if I have been so fortunate as to be useful to you, grant me the favour not to ask. And see—you are looked for—the party you came here with is approaching."

"At least," said Madame La V., whose curiosity, as well as her gratitude, was now awakened, "promise that I shall see you to-morrow at my house at dinner. I have just four friends to be with me."

"They are relatives."

"True, they are so—but I shall be glad to introduce you.—Will you promise?"

"I do promise," replied the stranger, turning to a beaufet, "that I will present you with a glass of the same wine to-morrow, at your own table, as this which I now offer, on condition that you will drink it with me."

The lady touched the goblet; her friends appeared; the stranger bowed profoundly, and was lost in the multitude.

Madame La V. never slept a wink all night; and, next morning, was perfectly in a fever.—"That she should not have been able even to guess at him!"—"which of her acquaintance could it be?"—But dinner-time approached—the servants had orders to admit a stranger—one hour more, and the mystery would be at an end.

But the dinner-hour came, and the stranger did not come. Madame La V. had announced to her friends (though without going through the details), that she expected a visitor who was not known to them; but the last remnant of Monsieur the Chef's patience was exhausted, and still he did not appear.

"Are you certain, Louis," said the lady to her servant in waiting, "that no gentleman has called?"

It was impossible that he could have called without Louis having seen him.

Dinner commenced, and Madame La V. was absent and fretful. The first course, however, was got through, and she called, according to her custom, for a glass of wine.

The valet who was in attendance presented a glass of St. Perage.

"How stupid!" cried Madame La V. "Do you not know that it is Bordeaux—the *other* wine—always that I take?"

"Your ladyship's pardon!" said Louis, "but it was *this*, which your ladyship, last night, permitted that I should present to you."

Little chance adventures of this character were not at all uncommon at this period. And, now and then, strange groups and characters were purposely concerted by the directors of the entertainment. Some of these were in a taste which modern refinement would not endure—almost as liberal, indeed, as that of the still earlier day of Louis the 11th; at whose entry into Paris, we are told that "*plusieurs belles filles, en role de Sirennes*," exhibited themselves in a fountain "*toutes nues—la fontaine de Pouceau;*" at other times, feats of legerdemain were performed, or activity: and, on one occasion, a Genoese (the Ducrow of his day) walked upon a tight rope, surrounded with fireworks (which made him apparent to all Paris), from the top of a tower of *Notre Dame*, into the window of a house near the *Pont au Change*. But perhaps the most whimsical among the genuine surprizes recorded at any of these spectacles, was that which occurred in Paris the 15th of October, on the day when the Dauphin (son of Louis the 15th) attained the age of one-and-twenty.

At this fête, which was of a peculiarly glittering character—so much so, that the details of it are given at great length by the historians of the day—the strange demeanour of a man in a yellow domino, early in the evening, excited attention. This mask, who shewed nothing remarkable as to figure—though tall rather, and of robust proportion—seemed to be gifted with an *appetite*, not merely past human conception, but passing the fancies even of romance.

> "The Dragon of old, who churches ate
> (He used to come on a Sunday)
> Whole congregations were to him
> But a dish of salmagundi,"—

he was but a nibbler—a mere diddler—to this stranger of the yellow domino. He passed from chamber to chamber—from table to table of refreshments—not tasting, but devouring—

devastating—all before him. At one board, he dispatched you a fowl, two-thirds of a ham, and half a dozen bottles of champagne; and, the very next moment, he was found seated in another apartment, performing the same feat, with a stomach better than at first. This strange course went on, until the company (who at first had been amused by it) became alarmed and tumultuous.

"Is it the same mask—or are there several dressed alike?" demanded an officer of guards, as the yellow domino rose from a seat opposite to him, and quitted the apartment.

"I have seen but one—and, by Heaven, here he is again!" exclaimed the party to whom the query was addressed.

The yellow domino spoke not a word, but proceeded straight to the vacant seat which he had just left, and again commenced supping, as though he had fasted for the half of a campaign.

At length, the confusion which this proceeding creates, becomes universal; and the cause reaches the ear of the Dauphin.

"He is the very devil, your Highness!" exclaimed an old nobleman—(saving your Highness's royal presence)—"or wants but a tail, to be so!"

"Say, rather, he should be some famished poet, by his appetite," replied the Prince, laughing. "But there must be some juggling;—he spills all this wine, and hides the provisions under his robe."

Even while they speak, the yellow domino enters the room in which they are talking; and, as usual, proceeds to the table of refreshments.

"See here, my lord!" cried one—"I have seen him do this thrice!"

"I, twice!"—"I, five times!"—"And I, fifteen!"

This becomes too much. The master of the ceremonies is questioned. He knows nothing—and the yellow domino is interrupted as he is carrying a bumper of claret to his lips.

"The Prince's desire is, that Monsieur who wears the yellow domino should unmask."—The stranger hesitated.

"The command with which his Highness honours Monsieur, is perfectly absolute."

Against that which is absolute, there is no contending. The yellow man throws off his mask and domino;—and it is a private trooper of the Irish dragoons!

"And in the name of gluttony, my good friend, (not to ask how you gained admission), how have you contrived," said the Prince, "to sup to-night so many times?"

"Sire, I was but beginning to sup—with reverence be it said—when your royal message interrupted me."

"Beginning!" exclaimed the Dauphin in amazement—"then what is it that I have heard and seen? Where are the herds of oxen which have disappeared, and the hampers of Burgundy? I insist upon knowing how this is!"

"It is, Sire," returned the soldier—"may it please your Grace—that the troop to which I belong is to-day on guard. We have purchased one ticket among us, and provided this yellow domino, which fits us all. By which means the whole of the front rank—myself being the last man—have supped, if the truth must be told, at discretion; and the leader of the rear rank—saving your Highness's commands—is now waiting outside the door, to take his turn!" (1)

HORATIAN EMBLEMS.

THE *Horatian Emblems* of Otho Van Veen (or, according to his more Horatian name, Ottovenius), the distinguished master of the great Rubens, display as much classical erudition and correct feeling as poetical invention or pictorial skill. His pencil and graving-tool have thus become the guides of life, and his workshop the school of wisdom. We shall therefore make no apology for introducing a short notice of his work, which, though deserving of the study and admiration of artists and men of taste, is not now so much known or praised as it ought to be.

"An emblem" is described by one who wrote a book of them, to be "a silent parable." It is an external resemblance of some abstract idea or moral sentiment, brought forward rather for the purpose of impressing the heart than of instructing the mind. Thus the course of the year is said to be an emblem of human life; and thus poetry has in all ages appropriated the flowers of spring, and the variations of the seasons, to represent the brevity and changeableness of our moral existence. But, in the use of emblems, both by Ottovenius and others, the term has a more general meaning, and includes the personification of a quality or the representation of an action, as well as a comparison or resemblance. In this sense, the greatest abstractions may be pourtrayed to the eye under the name of emblems. A book of proverbs may be converted into a collection of prints; and a system of ethics may become a gallery of paintings.

The ingenuity of Ottovenius, in embodying under this title the passions and interests of human life, the dictates of truth, and the counsels of wisdom, is truly surprising. His Horatian Emblems consist of 103 prints, founded each on one or more passages of Horace, containing an historical or mythological allusion—a moral sentiment, or a rule of conduct; the Roman ethical poet being, no doubt, chosen for this species of illustration, because his works contain a juster appreciation of human pleasures and pursuits, a finer perception of individual and professional character, and a greater portion of condensed good sense, applied to the direction of life and the formation of maxims, than any book of antiquity. These prints are of various kinds, and of unequal merit. Some of them are merely the personifications of the virtues or vices to which poetry and the arts have given a "local habitation," represented without much preparation of scene or novelty of action. But even in the less difficult task, the freedom and vigour of the Flemish artist's pencil, his skill in

drawing and composition, are so conspicuous, that his work appears more like an original inspiration of a great painter than a copy of Horace; and in looking at the letter-press and the engraving, it would frequently be impossible to say whether the print was suggested by the poetry or the poetry was a description of the print. Others again are of a much bolder and ambitious style. In the latter, the poet has only given the hint to the fancy of the artist, or struck the key-note of a piece which the invention of the latter has continued and completed. Thus, in the illustrating the maxim of *Festina lente*, or "the more haste the less speed," he gives a striking representation of a scene described in the life of Sartorius, in which that general, being unable to prevail upon the Lusitanians to abstain from a general engagement with the Romans, and to cut off these invaders in detail, ordered two horses of different degrees of strength to be brought forth, and set a young man to pull away the tail of the weaker by a single effort, while an old man was directed to demolish that of the stronger by picking it hair by hair. It would be needless to mention the result, or to point out how forcibly it illustrates the passage whose truth it was brought to establish.

——ridiculum acri
Fortius et melius magnas plerumque secat res.

He takes a similar advantage of another anecdote in ancient history, to establish that most intractable aphorism, that "custom is a second nature;" or to illustrate the Horatian text,

——Te ipsum
Concute, num qua tibi vitiorum inseverit olim
Natura, aut etiam consuetudo mala.

Lycurgus, endeavouring to bring his fellow-citizens to an alteration of their mode of life, and to convince them that habit would reconcile them to the change, is said to have brought up two dogs of different kinds, a greyhound and a mastiff; teaching the latter to pursue game like the former, and the former to feed like the latter. He then called a meeting of the people into the Forum, and having laid down the accustomed food of the one, and let loose a hare for the pursuit of the other, proved their change of instincts amid the acclamations of those whose moral conviction he wished to command. This scene, in which the philosophic legislator is represented in an attitude of triumphant persuasion, with one hand leaning on his table of laws, and the other stretched out in the act of demonstration, displays great vigour of conception, and is executed with singular taste and judgment. The keen interest which the assembled multitude, composed of persons of all ages and sexes, take in the experiment which is presented to them, is finely contrasted with the dignified satisfaction of the law-giver, who feels no curiosity because he had no doubt; but who appears pleased that he has so successfully settled the premises of the important conclusion which he was anxious to inculcate. The Spartan *Forum* of Ottovenius is, however, we suspect, surrounded with finer edifices than that in which Lycurgus harangued, and would certainly in our days not be built with waggon-loads of iron or copper coin.

Another instance of this digressive faculty of the artist, is found in the illustration of the passage—

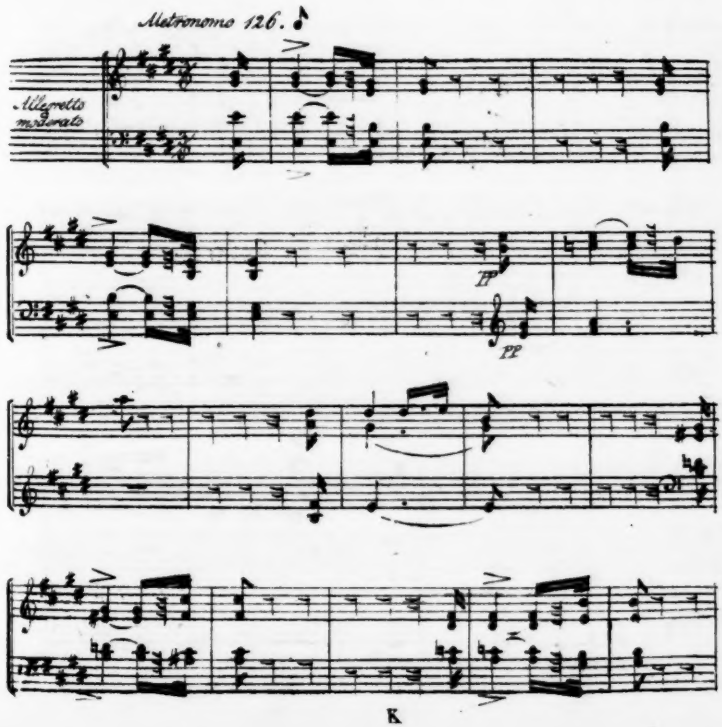
Quid quisque vitet, nunquam homini satis
Cautum est in horas. Navita Bosphorum
Pœnus perhorrescit, neque ultra
Cæca timet aliunde fata.
Miles sagittas et celerem fugam
Parthi; catenas Parthus, et Italum
Robur; sed improvisa lethi
Vis rapuit, rapietque gentes.

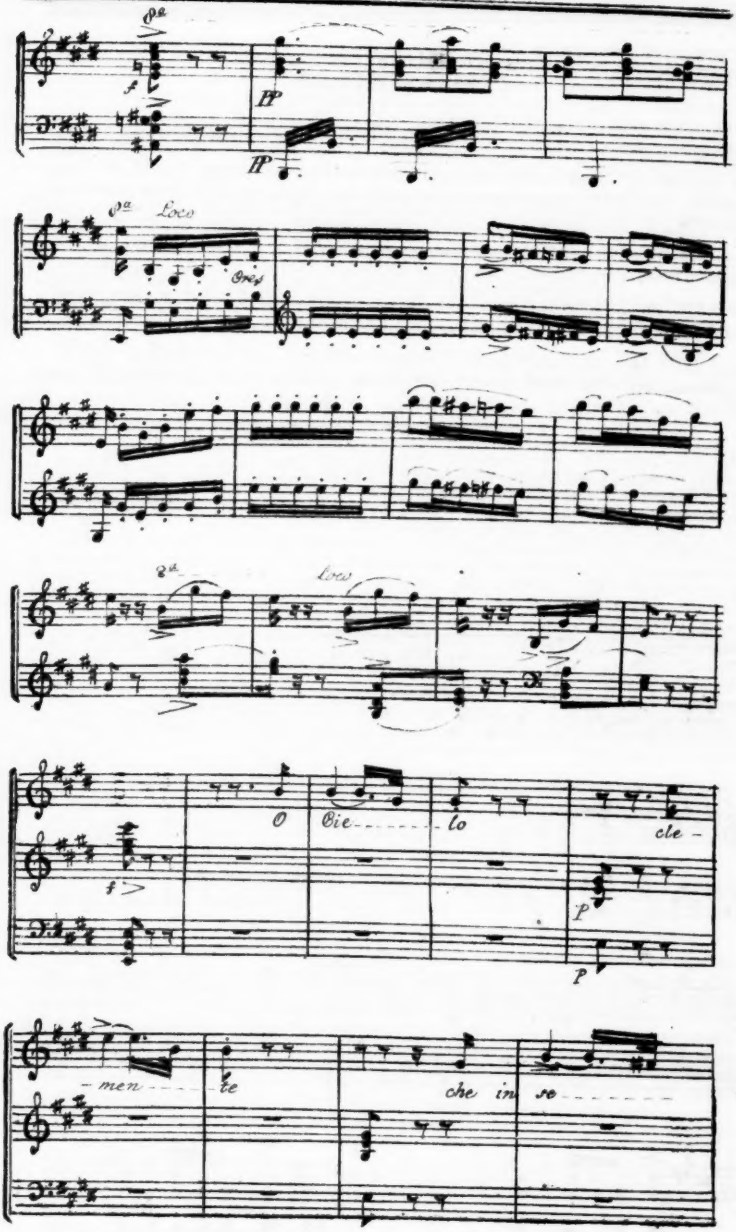
None of these examples of the inutility of precaution, or ignorance of the source of danger, is so striking as that which is presented in the reported fate of the tragic poet Æschylus, who left the city, that he might not die by the fall of a house, as had been predicted, and who was killed in the fields, by the fall of a tortoise which an eagle dropt on his head. The artist represents this scene with great fidelity and effect. By the way, his tortoise is very much like a West India turtle, and if the Greek citizens of that day had been as much addicted to green fat as to unjust persecutions, we might have regretted that the bird of Jove did not more appropriately select the thick polished cranium of the Athenian alderman who moved the poet's banishment, rather than that of the poet himself, to break its shell upon.

We shall give the conclusion of this article, with an example of the plates, in a future Number.

ITALIAN OPERA.

As the printing of the last pages of the PARTHENON *commences early on friday morning, our brief notice of Signor Velluti's appearance at the Opera House on thursday, must be in M.S. He chose to make his début as Armando, in that charming piece Il Crociato in Egitto, which formed the subject of an article in our last number. We have only room to say that the impression produced by Velluti was of a very singular kind. — His voice — like himself — seems something out of the ordinary course of nature. His tones are often shrill and harsh, but there is a magical effect in his style and execution. He was most successful in the last scene. We insert the following solo in which he was greatly applauded. It is the motivo of several succeeding concerted passages consisting of a duo, a quartetto and a quintetto.*

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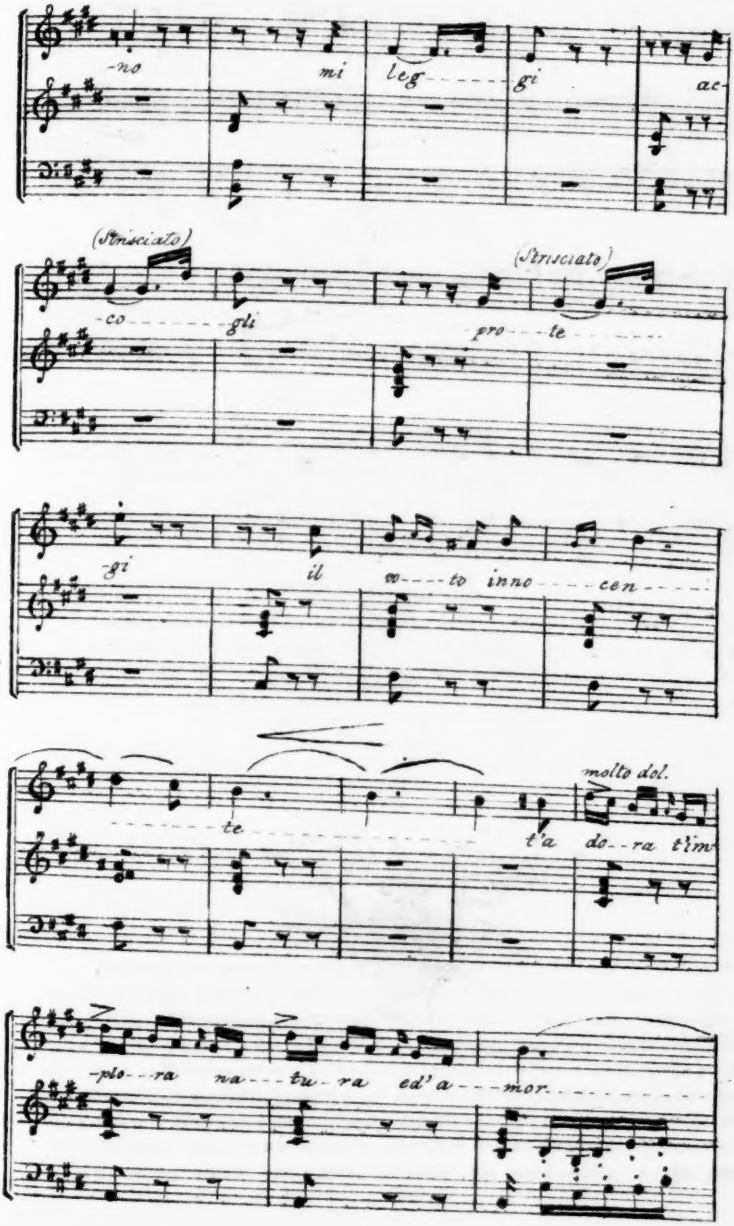
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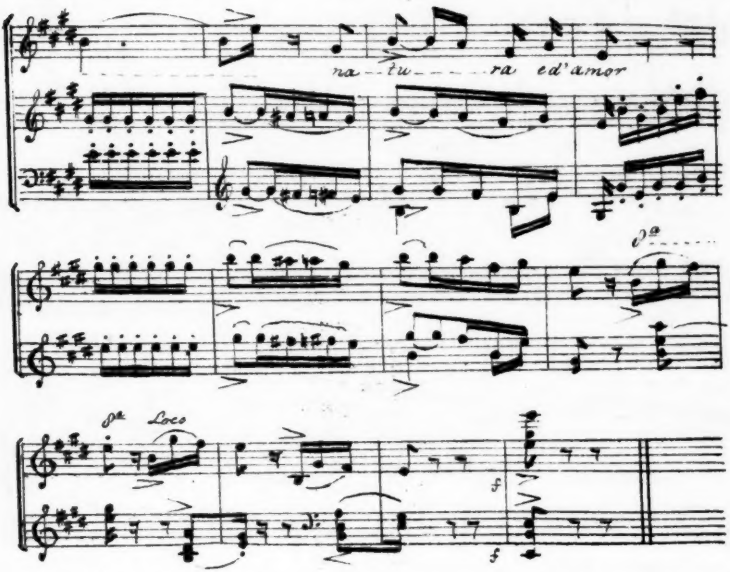

The whole scena from which the above solo is extracted is one of the most beautiful in the Opera, and is only rivalled by the exquisite Romance Giovanello Favorito.— We have selected it in preference to the latter because it has not before been printed in London.